

ICARUS: International Journal of the Solar System

EDITORS:

ZDENĚK KOPAL
Department of Astronomy
The University
Manchester 13, England

A. G. WILSON
Planetary Sciences Department
The RAND Corporation
1700 Main Street
Santa Monica, California

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Professor Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
Stanford University
Palo Alto, California

Dear Professor Lederberg:

Many of us, like yourself, who have been engaged in some aspect of planetary, lunar or other research pertaining to solar-system phenomena, are beginning to look on our subject as an important distinct area of science emerging at the intersections of astronomy, meteorology, geophysics, physics, and biology. You have probably experienced that the wide diversity of techniques by which research is carried on in our field—optical telescopes, radio telescopes, radars, space probes, to say nothing of diverse laboratory and theoretical studies—is causing increasing difficulty in keeping abreast of the new results. This is especially true when important new facts concerning solar-system phenomena may appear in journals devoted to radio engineering, jet propulsion, or infrared techniques, which many solar-system investigators do not peruse.

Looking ahead, there seems to be indicated a marked need for a technical journal of high standards expressly for those engaged in the various aspects of solar system research—whatsoever the technique. There is no question but that the future research effort in this area will be large and the number of research papers on planets, comets, meteorites, interplanetary fields and matter, solar-planetary relationships, etc., will be far greater than the present journals on astronomy, geophysics, or space engineering can handle.

We feel it may prove rather important for those scientists interested in solar-system problems, coming from diverse backgrounds as they do, to facilitate keeping abreast of each other's work by communicating promptly with each other, and having a forum for discussing matters of common concern as early in the development of this science as possible.

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We feel very fortunate to have found at the Academic Press a good appreciation of this problem and a willingness to back us fully in establishing a journal to fit the needs of scientists engaged in solar-system research and exploration.

Your own interests and important contributions to exobiological research have made us feel that you might be willing to assist with the establishment and operation of this new journal and serve as one of its associate editors.

The system of associate editors has proved to be very effective for filtering important research papers through to prompt publication. The associate editor may submit papers of his own authorship and any other papers contributed to him which he feels worthy of publication, endorsing them with his "submitted by _____" by-line. This system avoids the delays and many of the disagreeable features of the anonymous referee. We wish to stress that the associate editors would not be expected to do any proof reading or other editorial work incident to the publication of the journal. His duties consist merely of passing on to the journal what he would like to have published, and thus setting the standards for solar-system science.

We would like very much to have you join what we feel is a distinguished board of associate editors and make your own contribution through this journal. We feel that the success of the journal will be greatly enhanced by your advice and experience and through your active participation. We sincerely hope you will be able to be one of the journal's associate editors.

Let us add that the title Icarus is tentative. We would like to have your suggestions on titles which you feel would be appropriate for the journal.

Sincerely yours,

Z. Kopal

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A. G. Wilson

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